

**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
INITIAL/FINAL POLLUTION REPORT**

DATE: August 12, 2004

SUBJECT: Americold Logistics Warehouse Fire

FROM: Carter Williamson, OSC
USEPA Region 4

TO: S. Hitchcock, EPA
D. Rigger, EPA
Region 4, RRC

I. BACKGROUND

SITE ID:	A4FQ
PROJECT CEILING:	None
LEAD AGENCY:	EPA, Region 4, ERRB 61 Forsyth Street, SW Atlanta, Georgia 30303
NPL:	No
FUNDING:	CERCLA
LEAD OSC:	Carter Williamson

II SITUATION

Date of Notification:	03 August 2004
Date Action Started:	03 August 2004
Pollutant:	Liquid ammonia
Quantity Discharged:	Unknown
Source Identification:	Facility Fire

III ACTIONS TAKEN

On August 03, 2004, the EPA Region 4 received notification of a fire at the Americold Logistics warehouse in Atlanta, S. Fulton County, Georgia. Americold Logistics is a deep freeze facility used to cool produce, foodstuffs and vegetables for future distribution to food chains/retail throughout the Southeast. Initial information provided to the local emergency responders indicated that liquid ammonia had ignited causing an explosion and fire at the facility.

The cause of the ammonia release was employee error. Apparently, a generator had been

dropped onto a line/valve by a fork lift causing the ammonia line to puncture and release its contents under pressure. The ensuing force caused an ignition, explosion and resulting fire. Numerous loading doors were blown out and away from the loading docks but fortunately, no injuries resulted to employees of the facility. Numerous fire departments responded to the fire and facility and adjacent businesses were evacuated as a precaution.

OSC Williamson coordinated with the Incident Commander, EMA, GA EPD and Americold Logistics management to provide assistance with air monitoring, water sampling and hazard identification. OSC Williamson and GA EPD staff Ken Perry worked with Americold Logistics staff to contain runoff from the fire entering a containment area on the facility and a drainage pathway to a small tributary. This tributary directly fed to the Chattahoochee River. At the time of the incident, no fish kills were documented. START teams were mobilized to the site to conduct air monitoring for ammonia gas and particulates.. The IDLH for ammonia is 300 and the levels documented during air monitoring did not exceed 5 ppm. GAEPD collected water samples with the assistance of OSC Ben Franco who had also mobilized to the site with the mobile command post (ambulance) to assist the Unified Command.

Fire fighters extinguished the fire and air sampling/monitoring conducted by the START teams present indicated that particulate matter/smoke had decreased dramatically in correlation to the subsidence of the fire. Air monitoring of the remaining plume did not detect any airborne contaminants of concern and the evacuation of surrounding businesses was lifted.

OSC Williamson and the GA EPD responder Ken Perry directed Americold Logistics to task Hulcher Services to construct a temporary dam in the containment area on the facility to prevent further contaminated fire water from moving off-site to the adjacent tributary and Chattahoochee River. OSC Williamson also encouraged Americold Logistics management to design and implement a closed system to allow their on-site containment area to better function as such, hence any future accidents/releases can be captured at least on a temporary basis in their containment basin. OSCs Williamson and Franco and GA EPD Ken Perry then met with EMA and the IC to discuss the status of the response and the results of air monitoring/sampling actions. OSCs Williamson and Franco, GA EPD Ken Perry and START staff demobed at 1850 on August 3, 2004.

IV FUTURE ACTIONS

OSC Williamson will follow-up with GA EPD to determine the results of the water sampling and will send the FINAL POLREP and START report to the Fulton County Fire Captain for their records.

V ESTIMATED COSTS

EPA	\$ 0
START	\$ 1,300 (estimated)

VI. ROSTER OF AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS ASSISTING IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Organization/Agency	Primary Contact	Phone Number	Role/Activity
USEPA R4	Carter Williamson	404-562-8742	On-Scene Coordinator
USEPA R4	Ben Franco	404-562-8758	On-Scene Coordinator
GA EPD	Ken Perry	678-770-6043	Emergency Response
Fire Dept.	Keith Padgett	404-762-4139	IC-Fire Captain-Fulton Co.
EMA	Jim Cook	404-730-5600	Director
Americold	Tony Easterwood	678-296-9945	Facility Manager
Americold	Gary Walker	678-640-6954	Environmental Facility Manager
Hulcher	James Bryan	404-422-4400	Asst. Div. Manager